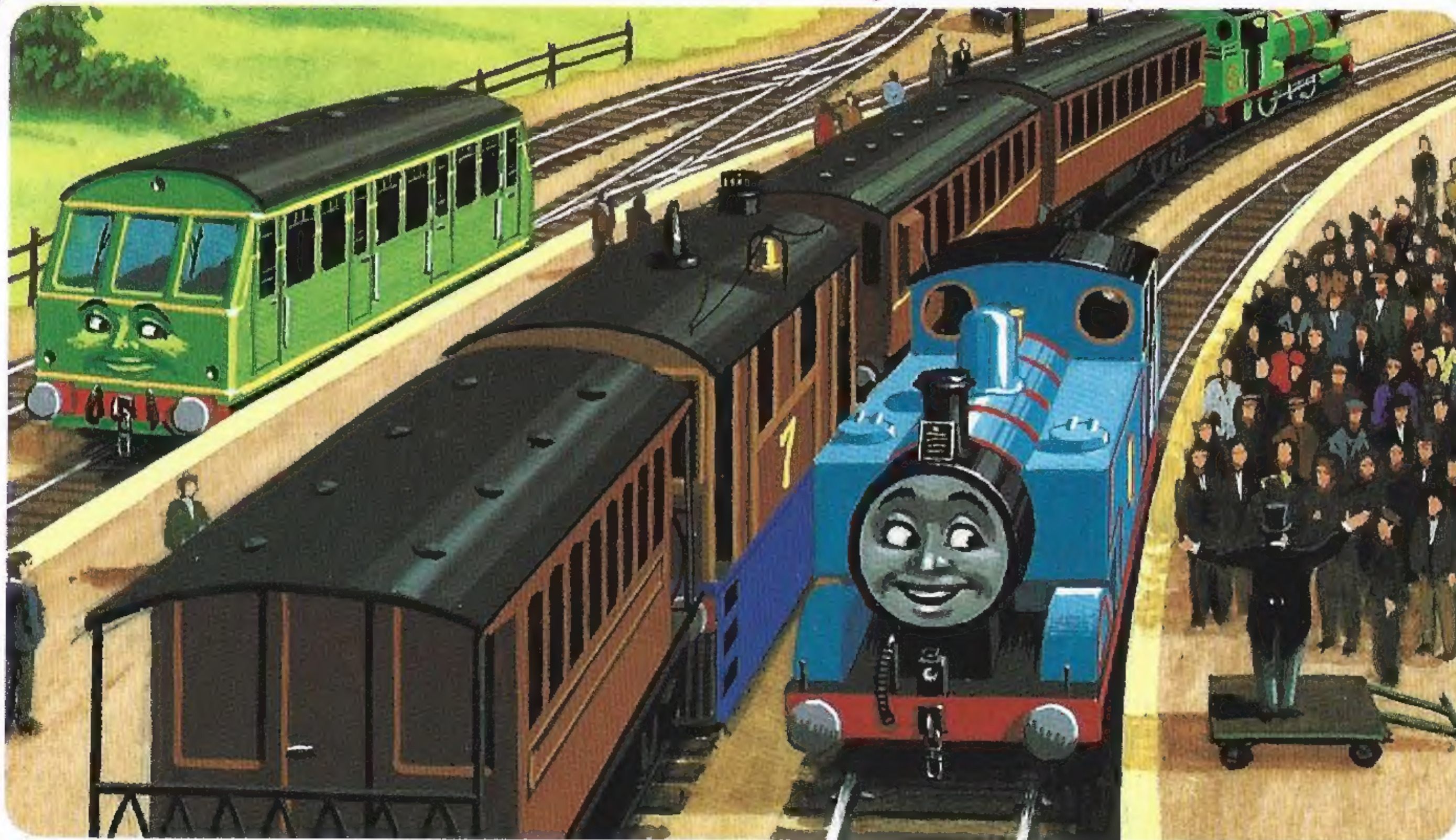
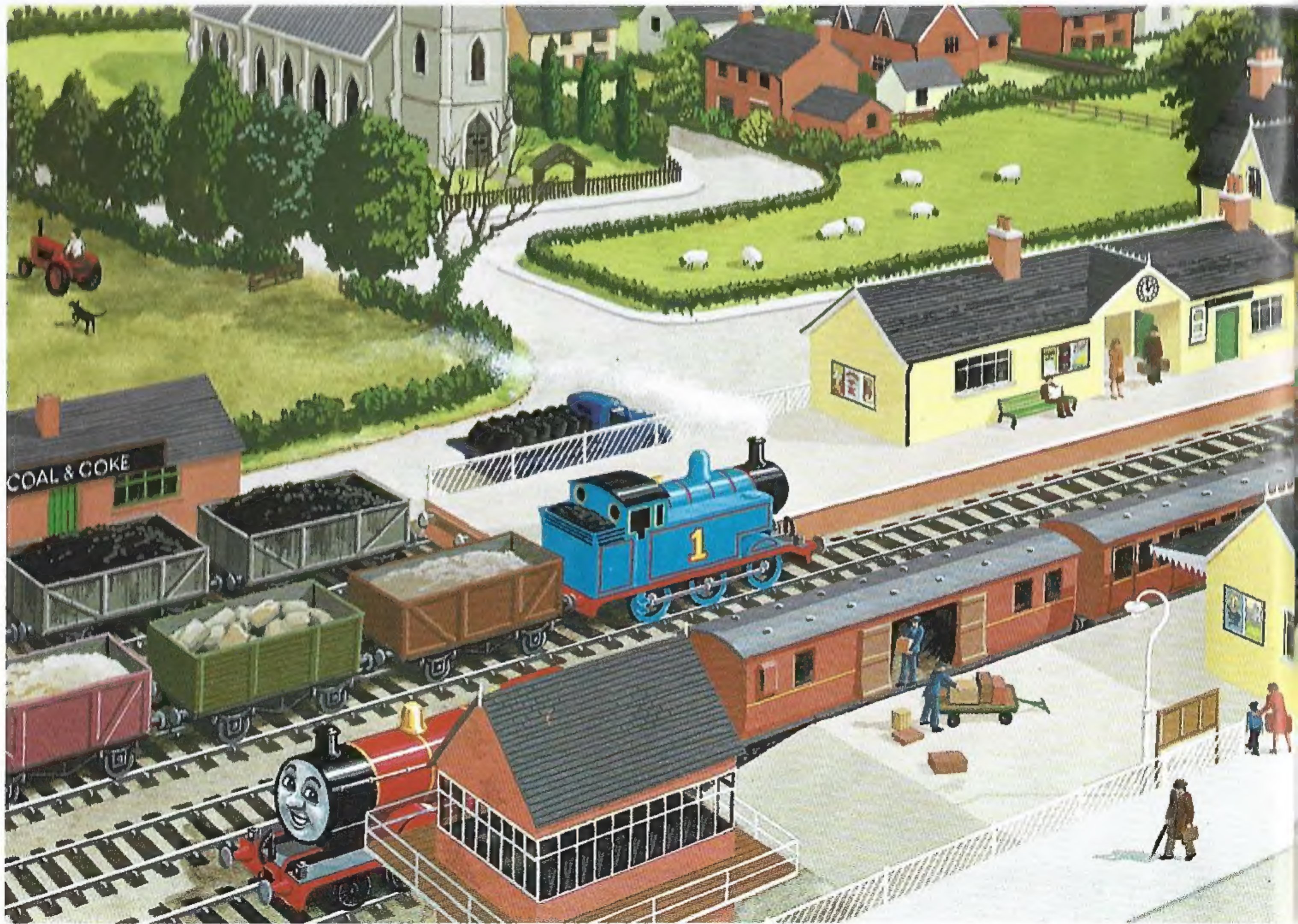


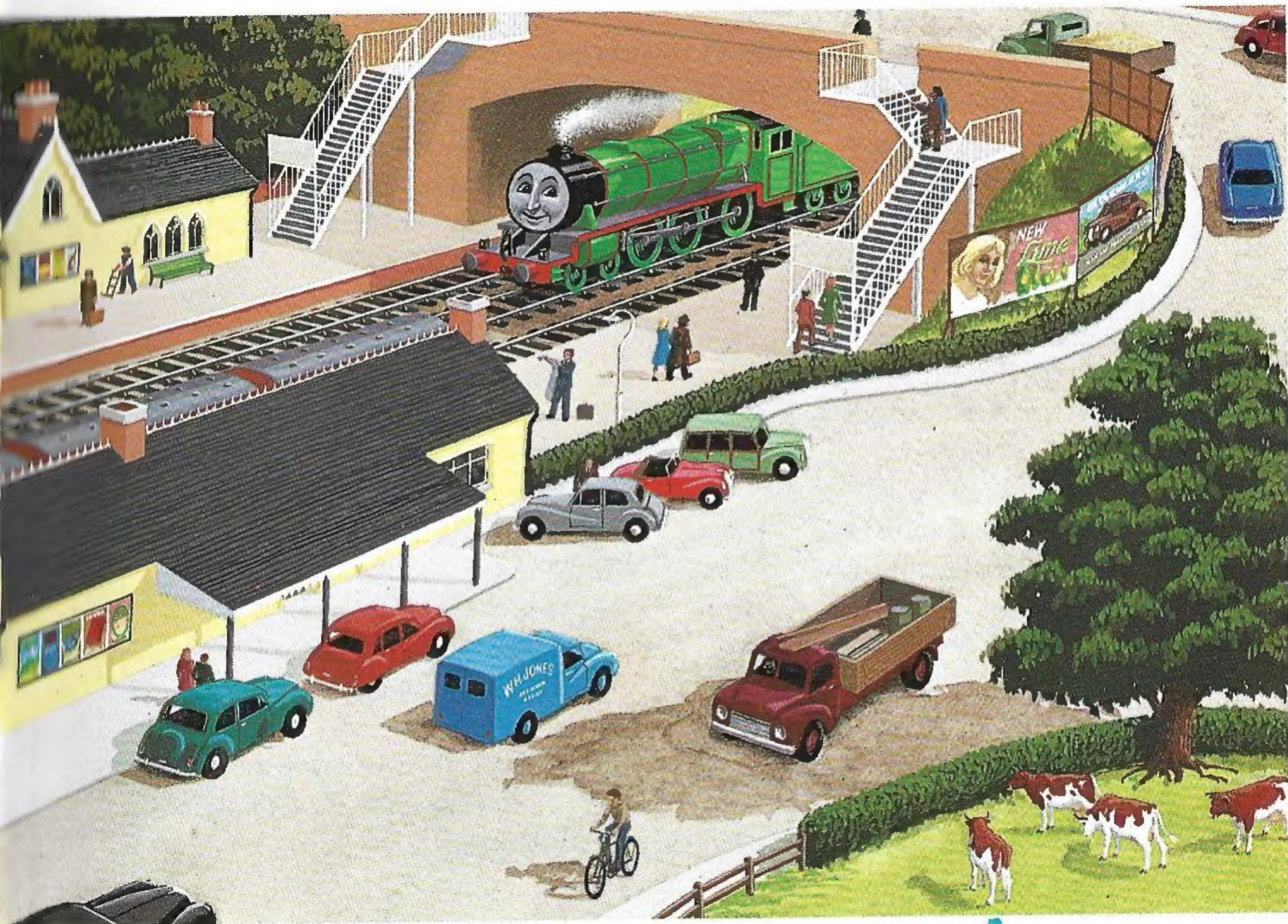
THE RAILWAY SERIES NO. 36

Thomas Comes Home



CHRISTOPHER AWDRY





Titles in this series

1. The Three Railway Engines
2. Thomas the Tank Engine
3. James the Red Engine
4. Tank Engine Thomas Again
5. Troublesome Engines
6. Henry the Green Engine
7. Toby the Tram Engine
8. Gordon the Big Engine
9. Edward the Blue Engine
10. Four Little Engines
11. Percy the Small Engine
12. The Eight Famous Engines
13. Duck and the Diesel Engine
14. The Little Old Engine
15. The Twin Engines
16. Branch Line Engines
17. Gallant Old Engine
18. Stepney the "Bluebell" Engine
19. Mountain Engines
20. Very Old Engines
21. Main Line Engines
22. Small Railway Engines
23. Enterprising Engines
24. Oliver the Western Engine
25. Duke the Lost Engine
26. Tramway Engines
27. Really Useful Engines
28. James and the Diesel Engines
29. Great Little Engines
30. More About Thomas the Tank Engine
31. Gordon and the High-Speed Engine
32. Toby, Trucks and Trouble
33. Thomas and the Twins
34. Jock the New Engine
35. Thomas and the Great Railway Show
36. Thomas Comes Home
37. Henry and the Express
38. Wilbert the Forest Engine
39. Thomas and the Fat Controller's Engines

THE RAILWAY SERIES NO. 36

Thomas Comes Home

CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

with illustrations by

CLIVE SPONG

HEINEMANN · LONDON

First published in Great Britain 1992
by William Heinemann Ltd
an imprint of Reed Children's Books
Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 6RB,
and Auckland, Melbourne, Singapore and Toronto

Reprinted 1993, 1994 (twice), 1995

Copyright © William Heinemann Ltd 1992
All rights reserved

ISBN 0 434 96089 6

Printed in Great Britain by
William Clowes Ltd, Beccles and London

Foreword

Dear Friends,

Daisy was most upset when she heard that people were saying there were no female engines on the Fat Controller's Railway.

"You must do something about it," she told me indignantly. "There's me and Mavis, and I was in charge while Thomas was away at that Great Railway Show, wasn't I?"

Well, she wasn't really, but would *you* dare tell her? These stories are about what happened before Thomas came home.

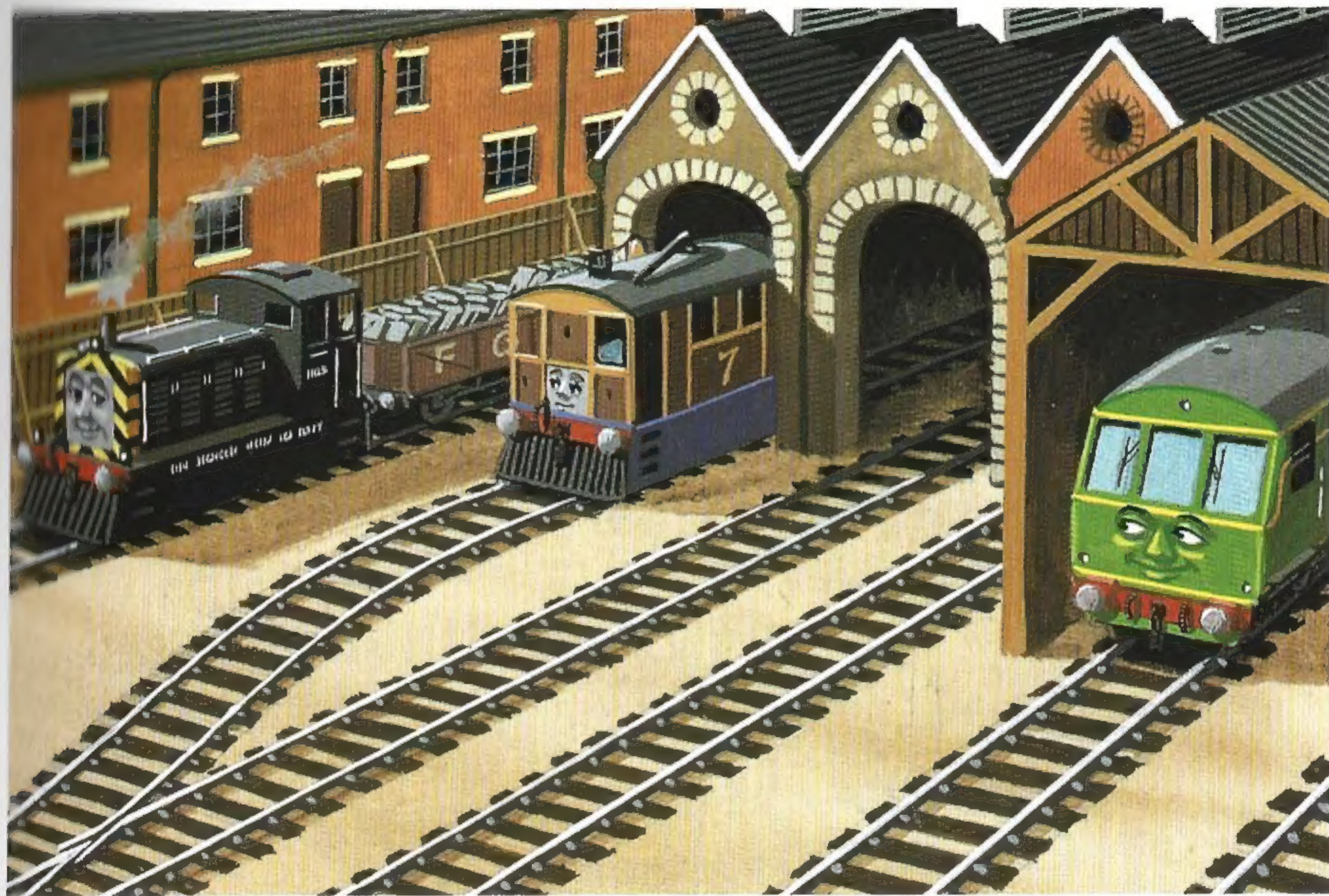
THE AUTHOR

Snow Problem

While Thomas was away at York, Percy looked after Annie and Clarabel and took most of Thomas's trains. Daisy ran the fast one, which connected with Gordon's express at the Junction. This made her feel very important.

"It shows how the Fat Controller depends on me," she told the others.

Toby was in charge of the goods trains, and ran down to the harbour. He enjoyed that. His stone trains were dealt with by Mavis, the diesel belonging to the Quarry Company.



One day snow on the Other Railway had delayed the train from London, so Gordon's express was late too. While Daisy was waiting for him at the Junction, the blizzard spread across Sodor. Huge white flakes whirled all round, and her driver was worried.

Daisy wasn't.

"What fun," she said to herself. "The other engines don't like snow, but I think it's pretty. And I've got the rails to guide me, so it won't give me any trouble."

Her driver was not so confident.



“Daisy hasn’t got the weight that a steam engine has,” her driver told the Guard. “She can’t push her way through, and we all know how Thomas got stuck, don’t we?”

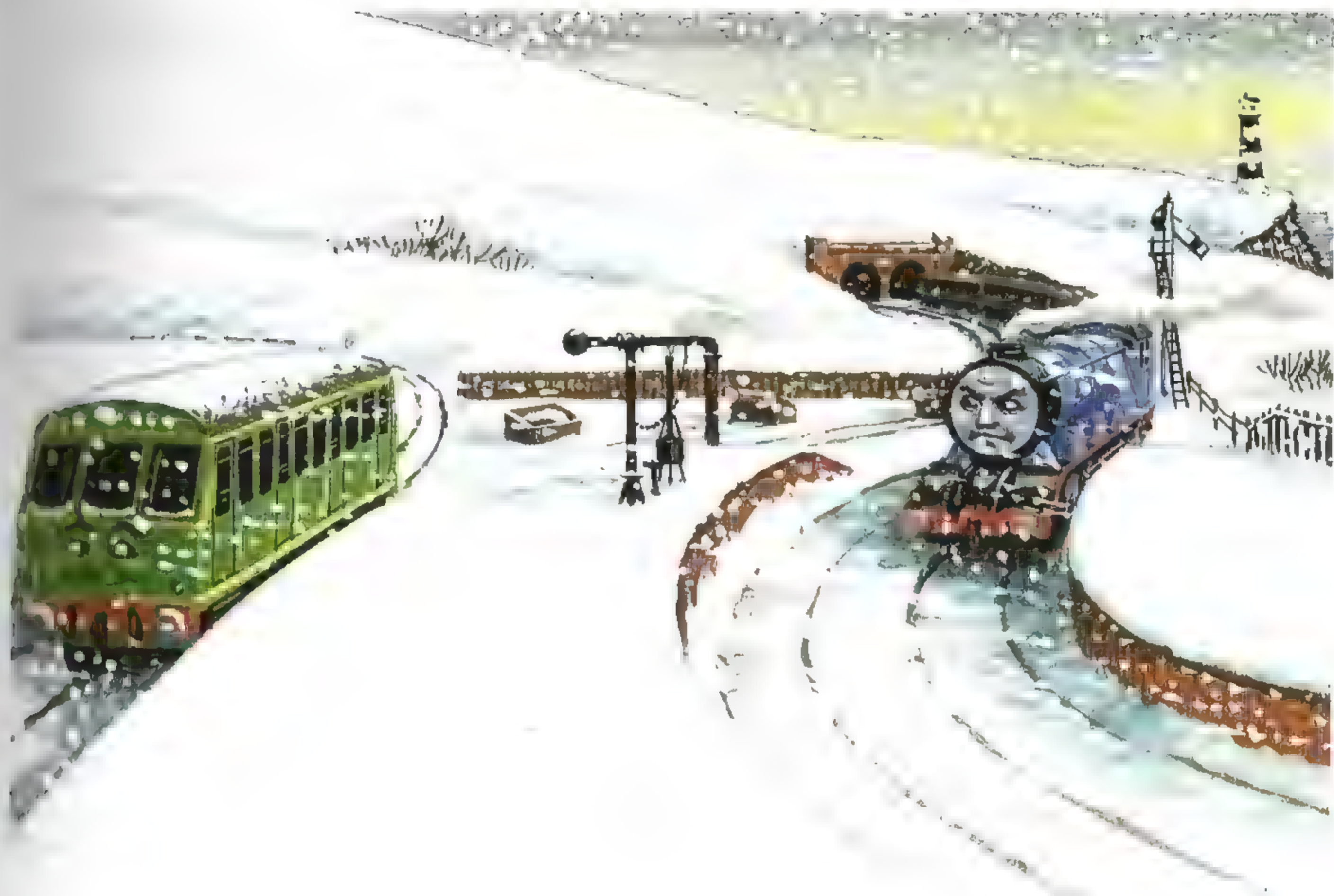
“He’s told us often enough,” laughed the Guard.

At last Gordon arrived, complaining about engines who were frightened of a bit of snow.

“It’s no problem,” boasted Daisy. “A few flimsy flakes can’t stop me.”

“Quite right,” approved Gordon, “Well done. But I’m late – I haven’t time to gossip.”

He puffed importantly away.



Daisy started confidently, but as they turned towards the valley the sky darkened and then was completely blotted out by whirling snowflakes.

“Ugh!” exclaimed Daisy as the wind blew them into her face. “I don’t like this.”

“Neither do I,” said her driver. “I can’t see where we’re going.”

They stopped at the next signalbox and Daisy’s driver went to talk to the signalman. He came back looking glum.

“There are deep drifts ahead, I’m afraid,” he told the passengers. “We can’t get through!”



“The signalman says Daisy must take you back to the last station,” he went on. “We’ll get you home from there somehow.”

“If we’re lucky,” the passengers said to themselves.

They weren’t. Before they had gone far Daisy began to feel ill. She coughed, hiccupped, and stopped.

“Help!” she wheezed. “I can’t breathe properly.”

“The snow has blocked your air-intake, I expect,” said her driver. He cleared it, but it was soon clogged again. Daisy could go no further: she felt like bursting into tears.



The driver got down again, and trudged back to the signalbox to telephone for help.

Daisy felt more miserable every minute. Even her driver, when he came back, couldn't cheer her up.

"They've promised to rescue us," he said, "but goodness knows how they'll do it."

They waited and waited, but no help came. The snow drifted higher, and was soon piled all round Daisy.

Suddenly she heard a whirring noise from behind.

"Oh no!" she thought. "Not another blizzard!"



Daisy was right. It wasn't another blizzard – it was Harold the helicopter. He dropped hot drinks for the passengers, and when they were feeling better he lifted them, one by one, into himself with what Daisy could only describe as a sort of chair thing. The passengers went to the airfield, where they were looked after until they could reach home.

Harold couldn't help Daisy. It was a cold, miserable week before Toby rescued her. She doesn't think snow is so pretty, now.

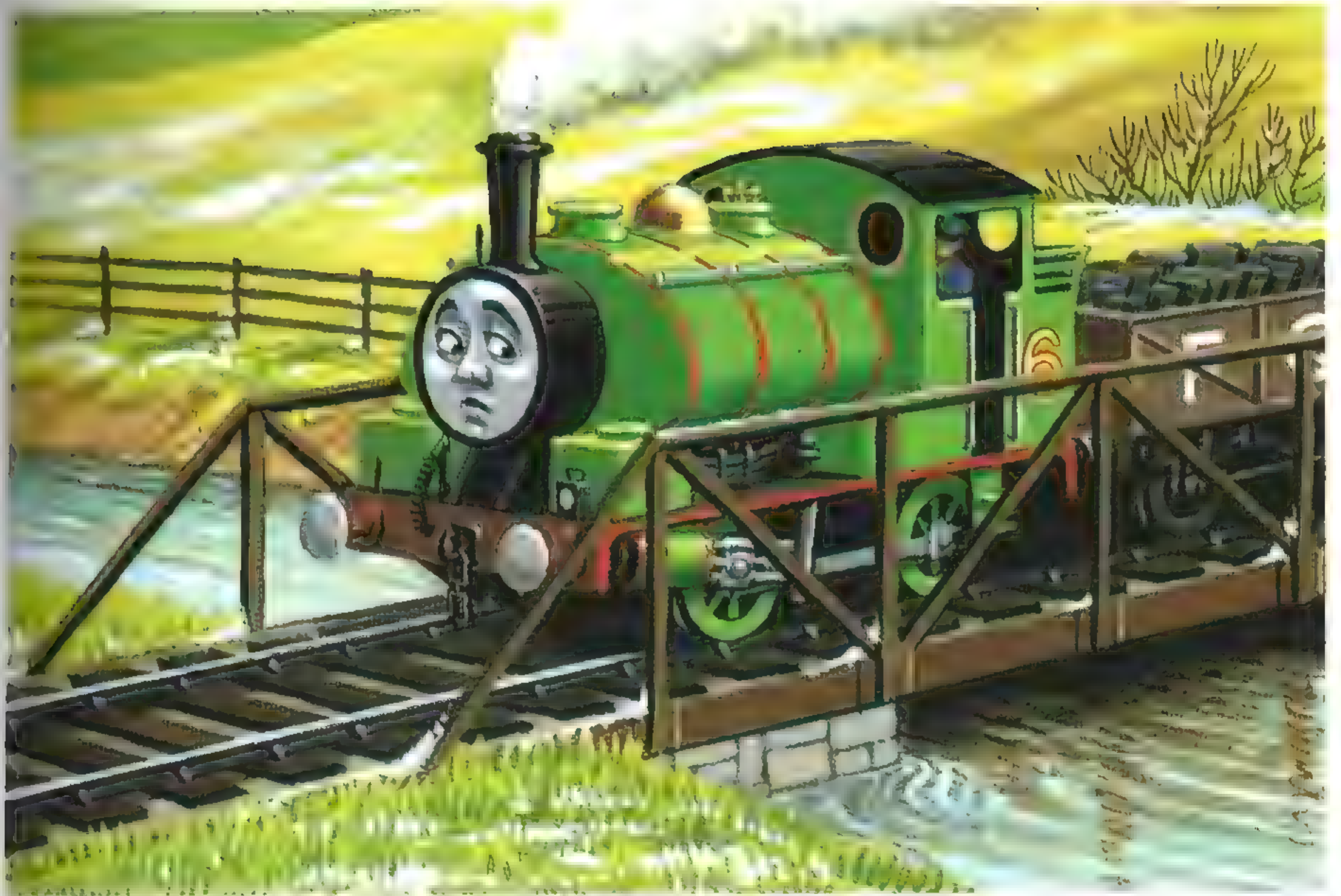


Washout!

Near the end of Thomas's branch line there is a small station, and, close by, the railway crosses a stream on a short bridge. As the snow melted, the water in the stream rose higher and higher, rushing and swirling in its hurry to reach the river at the bottom of the valley.

Each time he passed the place, Percy watched the water anxiously.

"Don't worry," said his driver. "It's got to come a lot higher before it can stop us."

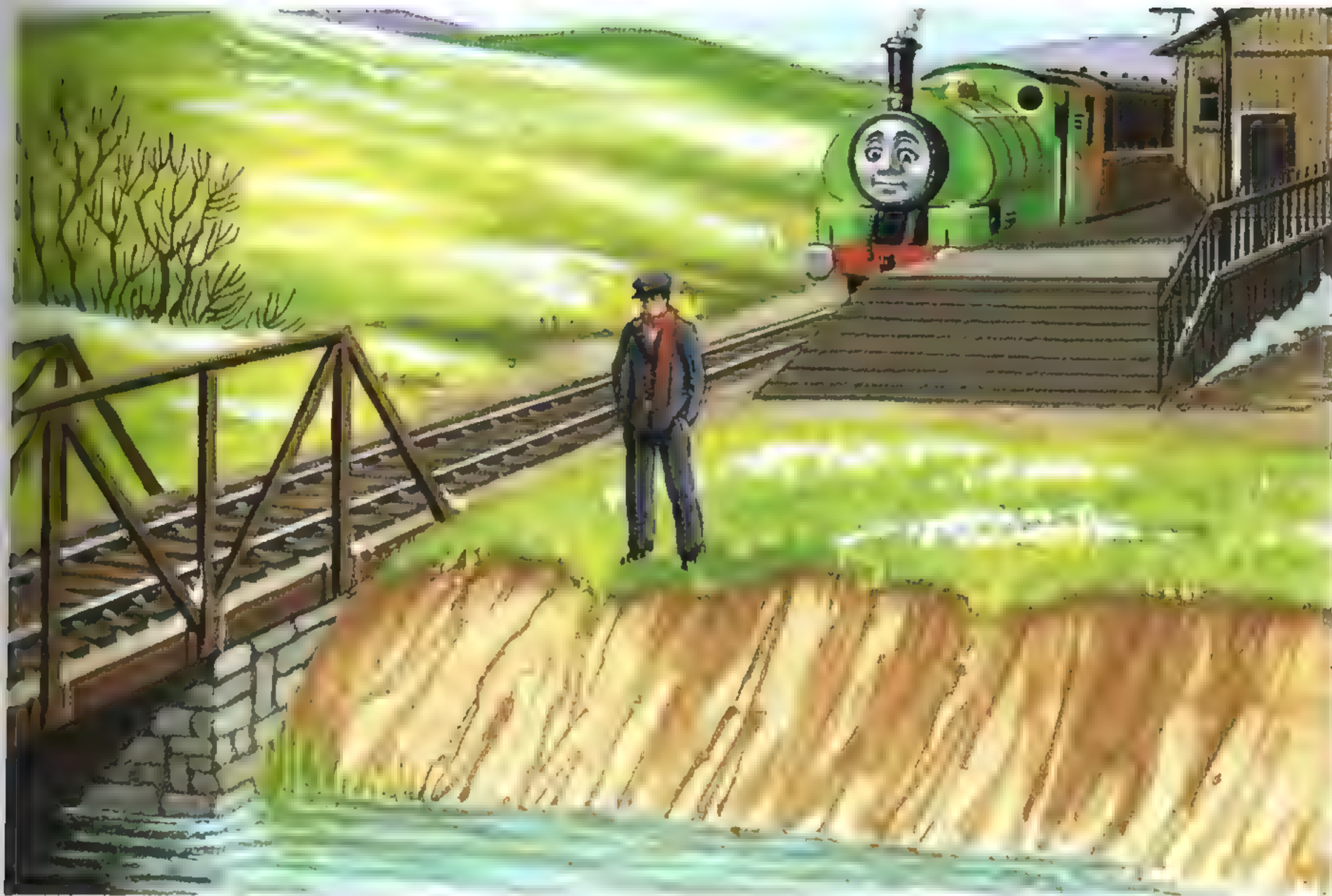


Percy shivered. He could remember the time when he had been stuck in a flood – he had got very cold and very wet.

Next morning Toby came up from the harbour.

“No problem with the stream,” he said cheerfully. “The water is much lower today.”

“That’s good,” said Percy. He set off happily with Annie and Clarabel, and when they stopped at the small station Percy looked carefully at the stream. His driver went to look too. Toby was right – the water-level was much lower.



“All’s well, Percy,” said his driver. “Come on – we’ve got a timetable to keep.”

They hurried to the Junction, where Henry was waiting for them.

“When is Thomas coming back?” asked Henry. “If he does,” he added. “I shouldn’t be surprised if he decides to stay as a museum-piece – he’s old enough.”

He puffed away, chortling at his own wit.

Annie and Clarabel were most upset. Percy had to spend so much time comforting them that he was late leaving with his next train.



Percy had his tank refilled with water at the station by the river, and this made him later still.

“Never mind,” said his driver. “We don’t need to stop at the station near the stream this trip, so there’s nothing more to delay us.”

They reached the stream quickly. But as Percy ran on to the bridge, he felt it sink slightly under his wheels. There was an ominous creak – the bridge swayed.

“Don’t stop, Percy!” shouted his driver in alarm. “Keep moving!”



Percy didn't mean to stop, and that was lucky. Clarabel was the rear coach: as she crossed the bridge it wobbled again. When her back wheels left it there was a sudden loud crash. The bridge vanished. One second it was there, the next it wasn't.

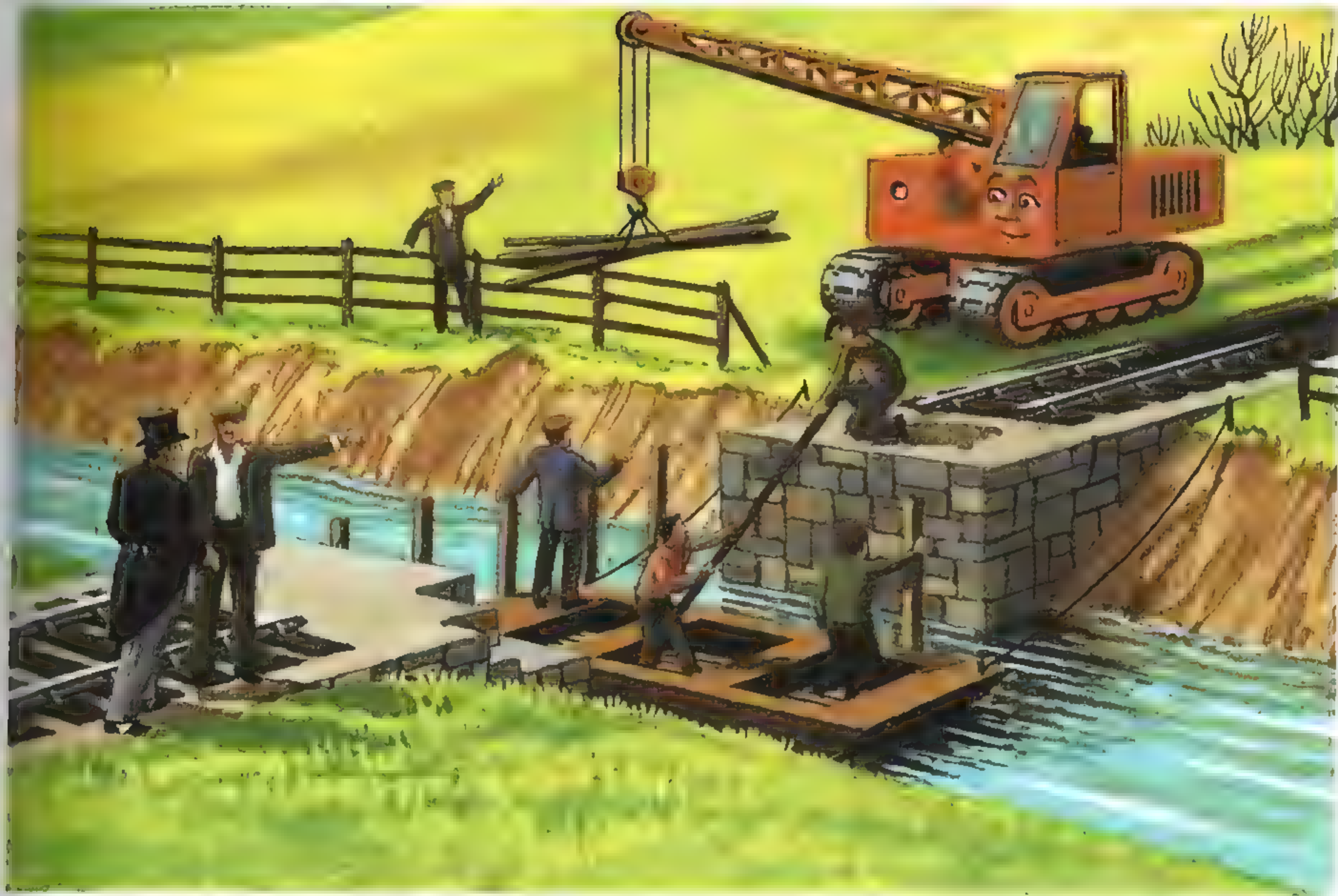
It was safe to stop now. Percy's driver put on the brakes and the fireman ran back to look. All he could see of the bridge was lying in the middle of the brown, rushing stream.



Annie, Clarabel and Percy were badly shaken. The Guard telephoned a warning, and then they all went quickly home. The Fat Controller closed the line while the bridge was mended.

At first Toby and Percy enjoyed their rest, but they soon grew bored. When the bridge was repaired, Daisy had recovered from her snowy ordeal too, and things returned to normal.

But for some time afterwards Percy was extra-careful whenever he crossed the stream in which he had almost had a bath.



Toby's Megatrain

Toby was delighted to take Percy's stone trucks down to the harbour. He thought it a wonderful treat. Percy could not understand why.

"It's only a harbour," he said. "Nothing special."

"I like it," said Toby. "It reminds me of the old days. I worked at a harbour on the Other Railway. I told you – remember?"

Because Toby had only a small watertank, he always had to refill it at the station by the river.

"What if we run out of water halfway?" Toby wondered anxiously.



“We shan’t,” said his driver confidently.

“But what if the water-column breaks down?” asked Toby. “Thomas warned me about the water from that river.”

His driver laughed.

“Don’t worry, Toby,” he said. “We shan’t take you fishing.”

The harbour was busy and Toby worked hard. Not only did the stone trucks have to be taken down, but when they had been unloaded they had to be sent back, often full of things brought in by the ships.



One day the stone trucks from the Quarry didn't come. Toby waited in the Yard.

"It's not like Mavis to be late," he said to himself. "I hope she hasn't had an accident, and met another lorry that forgot to look where it was going."

At last the stationmaster came over.

"Mavis wasn't well this morning," he said. "She's better now, and she's on her way."

And indeed it was not long before, with a cheerful toot, Mavis rumbled into the yard. Toby wasted no time in setting off himself.



At the harbour Toby found so many trucks waiting to go back that there was hardly room for what he had brought.

“Phew!” whistled the driver. “Forty-eight trucks, and not all empty, either – some megatrains. Two journeys really, but we haven’t time today. We could leave some and make two trips tomorrow...?”

“Can’t we take them all now?” asked Toby.

The Guard scratched his head, and Toby’s crew looked doubtful.

“We shall be all right,” urged Toby, and so they agreed.



But Toby had forgotten his small watertank. He had also forgotten that the journey was all uphill. He had to work hard, and used so much steam that by the time they reached the station by the river he had very little water left.

His fireman put in the waterpipe and turned the tap. Nothing happened.

“Oh dear,” groaned Toby. “Now what?”

“You could make it on your own,” said his driver, “but not pulling this load.”

Then he winked at the fireman.



“Well,” the driver went on, “I *do* know somewhere...”

“Is it far?” asked Toby.

The driver laughed.

“Not really,” he said, and went to see the signalman, who told him where to leave the trucks. Toby pushed them carefully into a siding. Then he was uncoupled, and they set off up the line.

“Where are we going to get water?” he asked.

“You’ll see,” smiled his driver, and stopped Toby right in the middle of the river-bridge.

“Now,” said the driver, “where’s my bucket?”



“Ugh!” protested Toby. “You promised!”

His driver and fireman laughed heartily.

“We’re only pulling your wheels, Toby,” they said at last. “We’ll go to the top station for water, then come back for the trucks.”

When Toby told Percy what had happened, Percy wanted to help, but his driver reminded him that he had a train of his own to run in a few minutes.

“Don’t worry,” said Toby. “I’ll follow you down and have those trucks back up here in a jiffy.

And he did, too.



Thomas Comes Home

Workmen were mending the road near the level-crossing. They sectioned off part of it with red and white cones, and a steamroller chuffered importantly. His name was George – he was a most unpleasant steamroller.

“Railways are no good,” he grumbled. “Turn ’em into roads.”

“Nonsense,” said Daisy one day. “No-one could reach the villages in the valley without our railway.”

“I’d build a road along your old tracks,” said George. “Nothing to it – my mates have done it all over the place.”



Daisy told Percy and Toby what George had said. Toby was worried, because he knew George was right.

“The Fat Controller wouldn’t allow it,” he said. But he wasn’t convinced.

Daisy was reassured, but she was careful to do nothing to upset George, just in case.

Then something happened which made them forget all their worries. Daisy was at the platform when the stationmaster came to talk to her driver. He had a letter in his hand.

“Thomas is coming back next week,” he said.



The engines were delighted, and so, of course, were Annie and Clarabel.

“The Fat Controller is holding a welcome-home celebration at the Junction,” Daisy told George.

“Lot of nonsense!” he snorted. “Makes no difference – your railway will be a road before long, you’ll see!”

At last everything was ready. The engines and coaches were to go to the Junction, and Daisy was to come last with a special train carrying the station-masters, Mr and Mrs Kyndley, and other important people.



Daisy set off happily from the top station. She stopped at the station near the level-crossing for her last passengers. There was no sign of George, but some red and white cones lay nearby. Two of them were even inside the crossing gates.

The Guard blew his whistle.

“Uuuuhooo” tooted Daisy. “Away we go,” and she rattled towards the level-crossing. As she did so, a gust of wind blew a cone towards her. It disappeared beneath Daisy’s wheels.

“Ouch!” she squealed, and stopped.



The guard removed the cone, which was now looking very battered.

“Grrrrrrr,” groaned Daisy, trying to move. “Help, I’m stuck!”

The driver got down to look.

“That cone has damaged your brakes,” he told her. “They’ve jammed hard on.”

“Oh no,” wailed Daisy. “Now the passengers won’t get to Thomas’s welcome in time. Why can’t that stupid George clear his rubbish up properly? I bet he did it on purpose.”

“Can’t be helped, Daisy,” said her driver. “We’ll do what we can.”



A fitter came, and the three men worked hard while Daisy stood and fretted.

“We’re going to miss Thomas, I know we are,” she fumed.

But at last the job was done, and Daisy set off with a roar. As they came near the Junction, Daisy could see a large crowd on the platform. Suddenly she heard a cheer.

“Oh dear,” she groaned. “We’re too late!”

“No we’re not,” said her driver. “Thomas isn’t here yet – it’s us they’re cheering!”

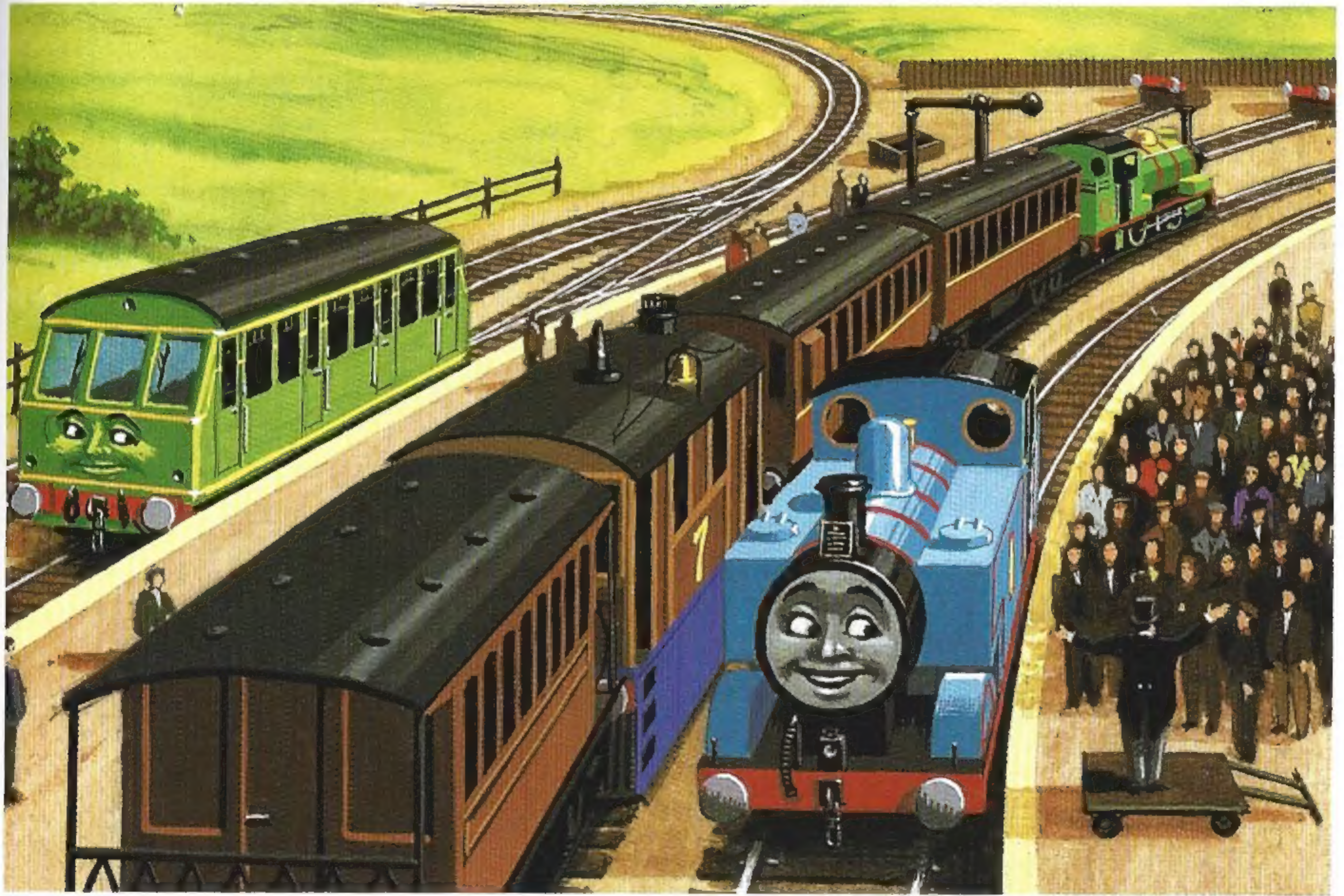


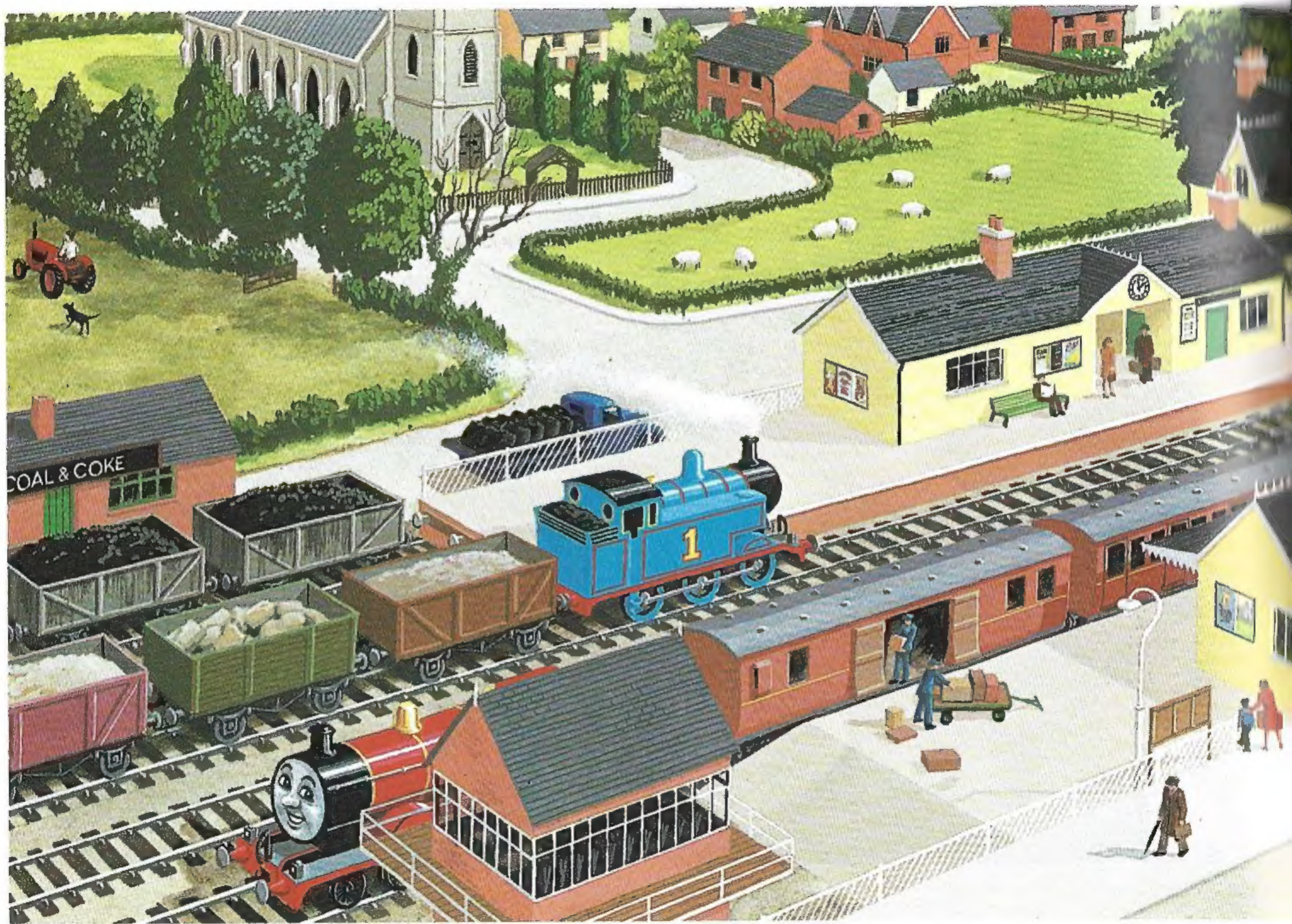
Just then the signal-arm dropped, and a familiar whistle sounded in the distance. Thomas came into the station – he looked tired, but he was smiling broadly. He carried the plaque which the National Railway Museum had given him.

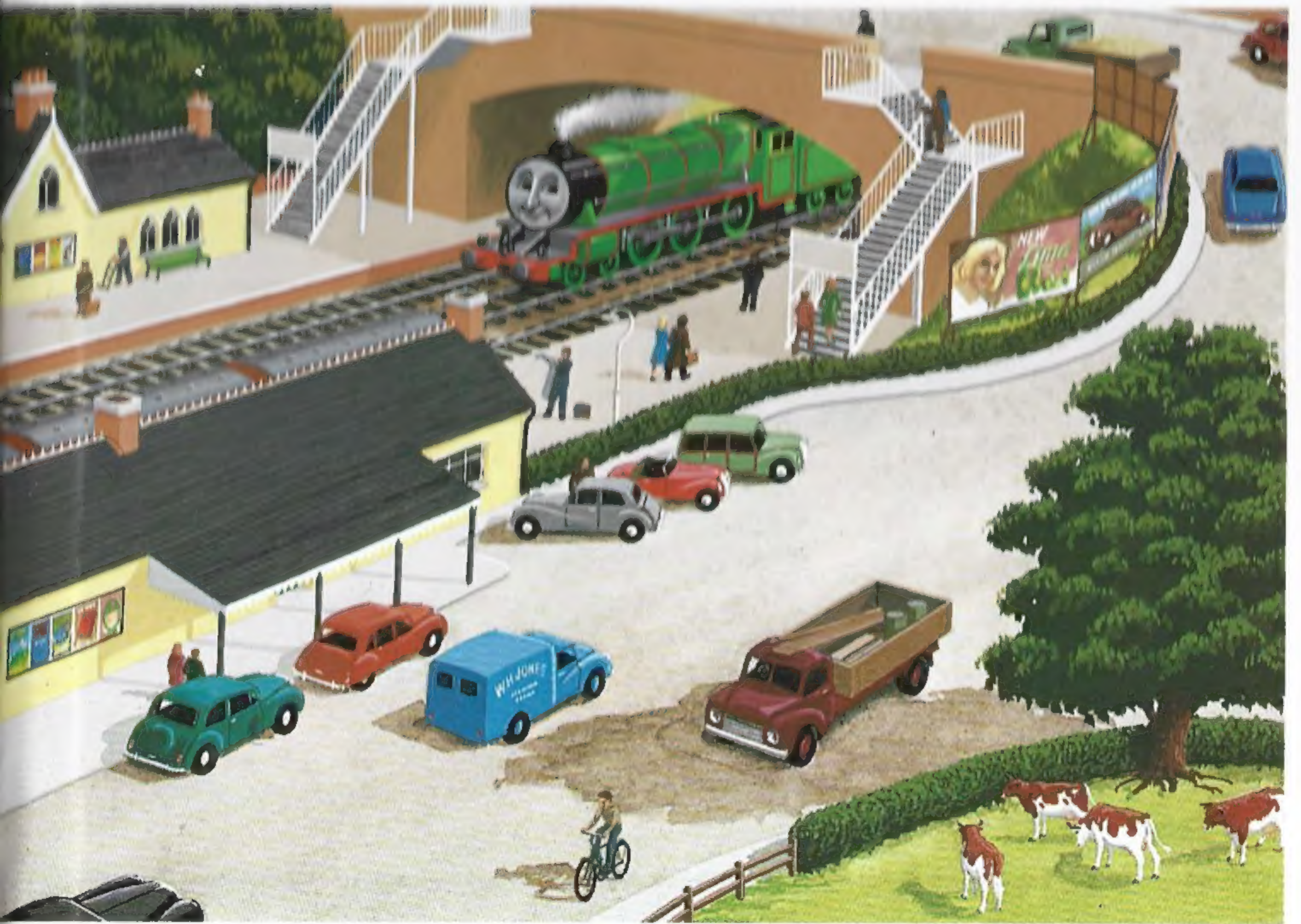
“Welcome home Thomas,” said the Fat Controller. “We are all proud of you, and delighted to see you safely back – especially Annie and Clarabel.”

Everyone laughed, and the Fat Controller held up his hand.

“Three cheers,” he called, “for Thomas our famous tank engine – hip, hip...”



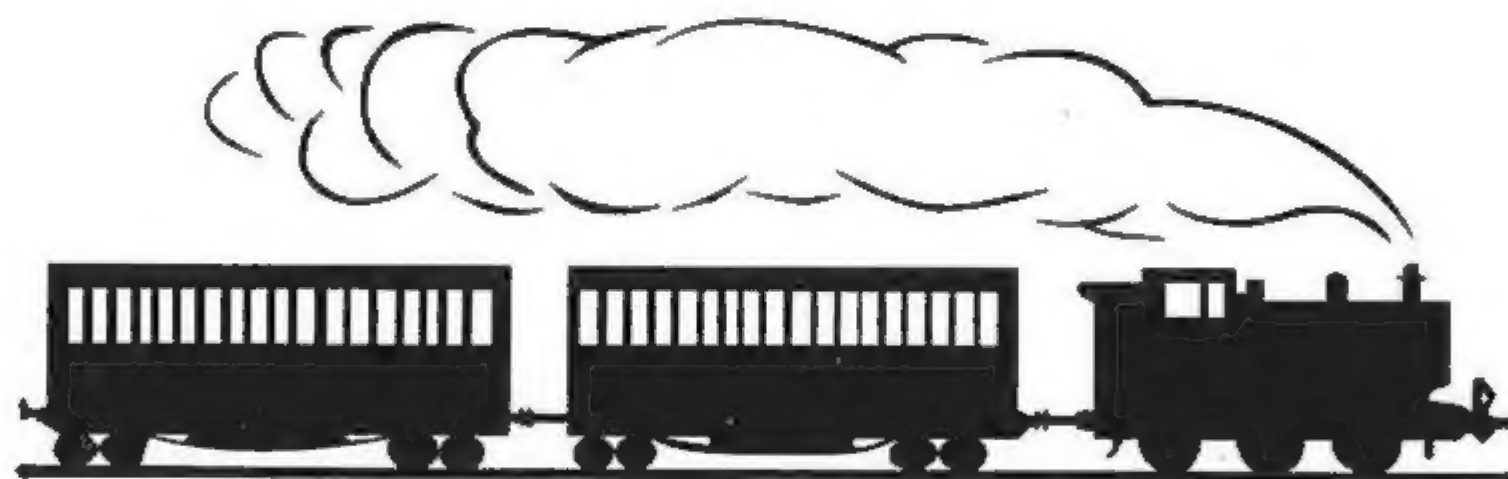




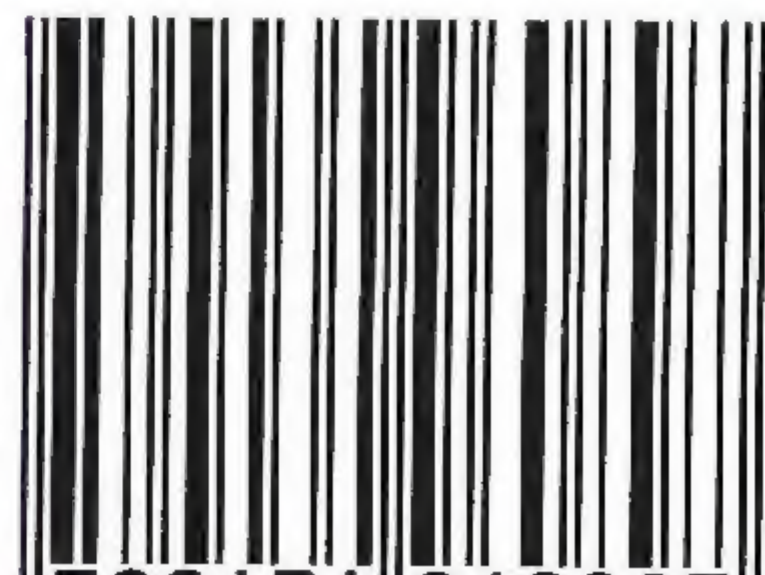
Thomas Comes Home

CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

When Thomas went to the Great Railway Show, Daisy thought she was in charge of his branch line. But getting stuck in the snow wasn't a good beginning. Percy and Toby had their problems too, but between them, they kept things moving until Thomas came back.



ISBN 0-434-96089-6



9 780434 960897

£4.99